

# J. ALDEN WEIR.

## An American Painter for Radicals and Conservatives.

*To the Editor of The New York Times:*

Few are the artists who command the respect, the admiration, and the affection of their fellow-artists as did J. Alden Weir.

He was respected because he was honest, admired because he was a true artist, and loved because he was generous.

It is difficult to explain the secret of his artistic triumph or to estimate the lasting value of his final achievement. Some artists are known as expert technicians having fixed methods, others remain always experimenters. Weir belonged to the latter class. Never contented with his own way, he was always trying out the new. He had style, but he never had a style. He never settled down, but delighted in the continuous struggle to express his impression—the thought which inspired each work—but that impression with him outweighed the manner of expression. He tried many media and many methods, but was never fully contented with any.

To him the advent of the "impressionism" of the early nineties—with its high key and vibratory color—was like the opening of a door from darkness into light. From that time on he lived and worked with doubled energy—lived as a pioneer in a marvelous, unexplored world, with a spirit of youth that he never lost. That was one of his charms and the basis of his influence.

"Modern Impressionism" has brought good and evil in its train. Many are the wrecks that mark its erratic course with its many offshoots. The horde of modernists, with all their outcry, have usually very little to tell us. They have no deep stirrings of the soul. To them the manner of painting—generally a startling, grotesque exhibition of force—is everything. They strive to win by exaggeration.

But Weir had restraint, based on a fine artistic sense. He was inspired by a deep love of the humanity and of the nature which surrounded him. He used the most modern means in a legitimate way and for noble purposes. He modernized truth and beauty.

Weir was admired both by radical and conservative. Both claimed him as theirs. The National Academy of Design made him its President, but declining health limited his tenure of that office to two years and he chafed under the responsibility involved.

He has set for us a noble example—one that will ever be with those that remain, for such choice spirits do not die.

HOWARD RUSSELL BUTLER.

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